

Soldiers

Online



The Golden Knights support recruiting by performing at airshows and other events, and by competing internationally.

Washington

Golden Knights Jump Into 2000 Tour

THIS year's special performances by the U.S. Army Parachute Team, the Golden Knights, include the Indianapolis 500 on May 28 and "Army Night" with the White Sox on Aug. 21 at Comiskey Park in Chicago, Ill. In this, their 41st tour season, the Golden Knights will perform at more than 70 events through November.

More than 12 million people each year see the Knights' aerial acrobatics and precision landings at various airshows and special events. Two teams — Black and Gold — perform at shows throughout the world to promote the Army and enhance recruiting efforts. The teams spend up to 230 days a year on the road.

The Formation Skydiving team and the Style and Accuracy team also compete in national and international contests, usually winning top honors. The

two teams are the current U.S. Nationals champions.

Since 1959 the U.S. Army Parachute Team has performed in all 50 states and nearly 50 countries. Along with demonstrations and competitions, the Golden Knights test and evaluate new equipment and techniques to improve skydiving safety and operations.

For more information about the Golden Knights' upcoming season, visit their website at www.armygoldenknights.com or contact Golden Knights operations at (910) 396-2036. — *Army News Service*

Washington

Army Standardizes Deployment Lengths

THE Army announced in March that it will standardize the length of time soldiers spend on certain deployments, regardless of whether they are members of the active or reserve components. The action applies to tours in support of operations other

than war and small-scale contingencies.

Under the new measure units will be employed for a maximum of 179 days performing their assigned missions in the areas of operation. Officials said normal, pre-deployment training, either in or outside of the United States, does not count toward that 179-day figure.

For example, for units going to the Balkans, any time spent in training, including their transition time in Bosnia or Kosovo, would not be applied to the 179 days. The 179-day time period would only begin once the units have reached their initial operating capability or, for major combat units, when

there is a transfer of authority, said MAJ Bernard Hyland, an operations officer with the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

Also, once a unit has completed its term of deployment, time spent on redeployment or on leave status does not count toward that 179-day total.

The action applies to all units employed in support of an OOTW or SSC, officials said, whether they perform their duty in Germany, Hungary or Kosovo. Also, in cases such as Southwest Asia, where the tours have been averaging 120 days, this does not mean those tours will lengthen to bring them up to 179 days.

Officials said implementa-

Career News

GETTING OUT

SOLDIERS magazine no longer accepts vacancy notices from units. Input is now provided directly from the National Guard and Reserve. Units with vacancies should contact the recruiting coordinators at the National Guard Bureau and the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve.

The Army Reserve website at www.army.mil/usar/vacancies.htm lists vacancies. The ARNG recruiting point of contact can be reached at (703) 607-7191 or (DSN) 327-7191.

Army National Guard units with vacancies are:

South Carolina

HHC, 178th Engr. Bn.
Rock Hill
(803) 366-8446

HHC, 3rd Bn., 124th Inf.
Panama City
(850) 872-4121

HHC, 178th Engr. Bn.
Rock Hill
(803) 366-8446

Florida

Btry. E, 265th ADA
St. Augustine
(904) 823-0395

HHSB, 3rd Bn., 265th ADA
Sarasota
(941) 361-6348



tion of the new policy will begin as soon as possible, but must be adopted by Oct. 1. The action did not affect the Texas National Guard's 49th Armored Division, which in March assumed command and control of Multi-National Division-North and Task Force Eagle in Bosnia.

However, future National Guard rotations in support of SFOR already take into account the 179-day rule, officials said.

The intent of the policy is to reduce the impact of extended deployments on soldiers, their families and employers of reserve-component soldiers, said

Patrick T. Henry, assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

Officials said reserve-component deployments in the Balkans previously averaged 210 to 230 days, including transition time, while active-duty soldiers spent, on average, 179 to 210 days. — *ARNEWS*

The first half of the show will trace the history of the Army with vignettes told from the perspective of soldiers and leaders throughout history, said Murray, and the Army Band, "Pershing's Own," will recreate the music of each era as the action unfolds on the floor of the arena.

The second half will showcase the Army of today through many of its performing groups. Most of the soldiers will be members of MDW units such as The Army Band and the Army Drill Team, but this year's "Soldier Show" members will also perform, as will the 82nd Airborne Chorus. The Caisson Platoon of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard) will give an equestrian demonstration.

Many Army units are contributing videotaped birthday greetings to the rest of the Army and to the "Spirit of America" audience, said COL Rich Breen, MDW's director of public affairs. "We'll show them to our audiences as they are arriving and also during intermission," Breen said.

Information about the show and on availability of free tickets is available by calling toll free (800) 701-5097, or on the Web at www.mdw.army.mil/spirit.htm. — *MDW News Service*

MWR Briefs

Affordable Summer Vacations at AFRC

ARMED Forces Recreation Centers offer affordable family vacations at premier destinations in Orlando, Fla.; Oahu, Hawaii; and Bavaria, Germany. As a First USA Bank cardholder, you can get a free Armed Forces Recreation Center Europe Vacation Planning Video (a \$4.95 value) by sending an e-mail to the address listed in the AFRC Europe web site: www.afrc-europe.com. For information about the other AFRC destinations — including Disney World; Hawaii; and Seoul, Korea — visit the MWR Gateway at www.armymwr.com and click on Armed Forces Recreation Centers.

Soldier Show Begins in May

THE U.S. Army Soldier Show is on its way to Army installations worldwide. The show premieres at Fort Belvoir, Va., May 12 before launching its 2000 tour, which includes performances in U.S. Army, Europe, during June. This year's corporate sponsors, USPA & IRA, Maingate.com and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, are helping to underwrite the costs of the show's six-month tour, which will travel to more than 60 locations in the United States and Europe. Start at the MWR Gateway to find the latest tour information, which was expected to be available on the site at press time.

Army Chess Championship

CHESS players, now's the time to submit your applications for the 2000 All-Army Chess Championship, Aug. 11 through 18, at Fort Myer, Va. The top 12 applicants will compete in a single round-robin U.S. Chess Federation-rated tournament, and the top six finishers will represent the U.S. armed forces at the International Military Chess Tournament Oct. 20 through 28 in Leopoldburg, Belgium.

Entries must be submitted by July 14 on DA Form 4878-R and must be accompanied by a commander's memorandum of release. For additional information check the MWR Gateway (click on Community Recreation Center program) or e-mail andersog@hoffman-cfsc.army.mil. — *U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center Public Affairs Office*

Washington

Spirit of America Returns

"BIRTH of an Army, Birth of Freedom" is the message of "Spirit of America," which is coming to the new MCI Centers sports arena June 14 to 18.

The purpose of the show, which honors soldiers but is also open to the public, is to fill each moment with as much entertainment, information and inspiration as possible, said a member of the Military District of Washington team that is producing the event.

"From the chill of Valley Forge to the frozen Chosin Reservoir in Korea, across continents and oceans, the American soldier has been there, done that, and a really big show is needed to capture its sweep of history," said MDW showman Mark Murray.



The 82nd Airborne Division Chorus will perform at this year's Spirit of America celebration of the Army's birthday.

Alexandria, Va.

Military "Eyes" Laser-Surgery Policy

A NEW Defense Department policy will allow individuals who have had two common forms of laser eye surgery to enter the military—with a medical waiver. Individuals who'd had corrective eye surgery were previously ineligible for military service.

The procedures are photorefractive keratectomy, or PRK, and laser-assisted in-situ keratomileusis, or LASIK, said Dr. John Mazzuchi, deputy for clinical and program policy in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. Mazzuchi said DOD's caution is driven by concern for service members' health.

"There are things the military exposes people to that are very different from civilian life—things like jungle or desert environments, diving or flying," he said. "What happens to the eye under those conditions?"

DOD is reviewing studies that address issues surrounding laser eye surgery and military service because they could become readiness concerns in the future, Mazzuchi said. The department wants to know, for

instance, whether the patients' vision remains stable over time and whether rigorous activity may be detrimental to a person who has had PRK or LASIK.

"Wearing glasses in combat is not as good as not having to," he said. "Soldiers who require glasses are not effective if they've lost or broken them."

While the military might prefer someone whose vision is correctable without glasses, he said, it's more important that their vision be stable and that military environments don't worsen their eye conditions.

Past experience with eye surgeries has shown the concern to be reasonable. Mazzuchi said the military barred individuals who had an earlier form of eye surgery called radial keratotomy, in which a surgeon corrects vision by reshaping the cornea with cuts resembling spokes on a wheel.

"Subsequent studies showed that our concerns were justified," he said. "Some people developed difficulty with night vision, and visual acuity didn't remain constant."

Mazzuchi said he expects DOD to review its policy on the issue in two to three years, when preliminary data from current studies is available.

"We'll look to see if we should loosen our policy or keep it the way it is," he said. "I don't expect us to tighten our policy." — *American Forces Information Service*

Hanoi, Vietnam

Defense Secretary Visits Vietnam

DEFENSE Secretary William S. Cohen told reporters his visit here in March was a significant

step forward in the five-year-old effort to build improved American-Vietnamese relations. Both nations were scarred by the Vietnam War 30 years ago and both need to move forward, Cohen told reporters.

His arrival at Hanoi's Noibai International Airport marked the first visit to Vietnam by a U.S. defense secretary since Melvin Laird in 1971.

Other U.S. government branches already have progressed in restoring diplomatic

More Career News

First Sergeant Course Update

THE U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, is finishing its development of the First Sergeant Course The Army Training System. With FCS TATS, active and reserve-component course programs are identical, and eligible soldiers from any component may attend the course at any site.

FSC TATS is a two-phase course. Phase 1 is a pre-resident, self-study package consisting of 57 lesson hours with a 3-hour exam. Phase 2 is a 15-day resident or video teletraining session. Each phase has a separate Army Training Requirements and Resources System course number.

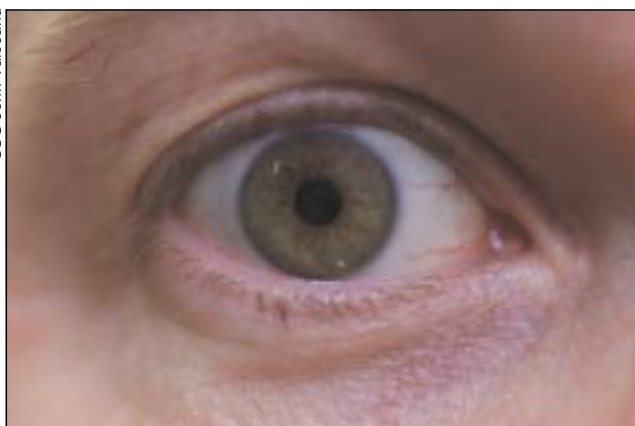
The course of instruction consists of eight modules: communications; leadership; discipline and morale; physical fitness; logistics, maintenance and security; training management; unit-level administrative procedures; and warfighting.

Phase 2 uses the small-group training method, where students read doctrinal references before class and participate in various activities to discuss implementing and executing Army doctrine.

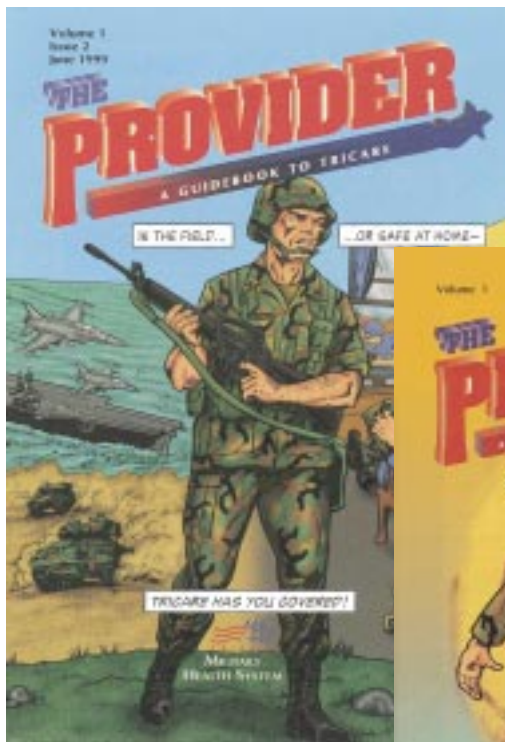
The implementation date for FSC TATS is Oct. 1. Resident training locations are Fort Bliss; Fort McCoy, Wis.; Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.; Camp Williams, Utah; and the 218th Regional Training Institute in Leesburg, S.C. The course is also available through distance learning from institutions that have approved distance-learning sites.

Participants must be sergeants first class or master sergeants selected to serve as first sergeants or detachment sergeants. All first-time first sergeants must attend the course within six months of assuming a first-sergeant position. Successful completion of the FSC is a requirement for the award of the "M" skill qualification identifier. — *USASMA Training and Development Section*

SSG John Valceanu



DOD's cautious acceptance of some corrective eye surgery is driven by concern for service members' health.



Each issue of *The Provider* covers topics of importance to military health-care beneficiaries. Recent examples include the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System and anthrax vaccinations.



and trade ties. Now, Cohen said, it's time to establish military ties. Vietnam is part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, so "it's important to have a relationship with Vietnam, just as with other members of ASEAN," Cohen explained.

Cohen met in Hanoi with Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and other officials. He said they discussed future cooperative efforts in demining, military support for natural disaster relief, sharing medical knowledge about tropical diseases, and search-and-rescue operations.

The secretary also stressed the importance America places on a full accounting of its missing in action.

Following his meetings,

Cohen traveled to an excavation site where U.S. and Vietnamese officials were hoping to recover the remains of a U.S. pilot who was reportedly shot down about 30 kilometers southwest of Hanoi. Cohen said his visit to the site symbolizes to all that the search for missing Americans will continue.

Cohen's stop in Vietnam was the second leg of a 10-day trip that included stops in Japan and South Korea. — AFIS

Fort Sam Houston, Texas

TRICARE Pubs Provide a "Mentor"

IF you don't understand TRICARE, maybe you need a

Mentor. MSG Mentor, that is — one of the characters in *The Provider*, the Army Medical Command marketing office's user-friendly graphic periodical on the military health system.

Each issue of *The Provider* covers topics of vital importance to military health-care beneficiaries. Recent examples include the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System; dental concerns; anthrax vaccination matters; Military Medical Support Office information; pharmacy updates; service regions and phone numbers; website information and addresses.

Two issues have already been published. Distribution of the second magazine doubled

the number of copies available for the first issue, and MEDCOM intends to double distribution again on the next issue, which will be the third of six planned issues. In addition to *The Provider*, MEDCOM marketing experts project an eight-poster series to help promote *The Provider* and the TRICARE program.

The Provider has been indexed as a miscellaneous publication and is available from the Army Publications Distribution Center in St. Louis, Mo., through regular ordering procedures. The correct nomenclatures for ordering the first two issues are "MISC PUB 40-11" and "MISC PUB 40-12"; the unit of issue is "EA." The next four issues, scheduled for printing and distribution this fiscal year, will be available as MISC PUB 40-13, 40-14, 40-15 and 40-16.

Mary Eichhorn, publications officer at the Office of the Surgeon General of the Army, is helping to troubleshoot *Provider* orders that go astray. Be prepared to furnish your publications account number so she can research your problem. Her number is (703) 681-8337 or (DSN) 761-8337, and her e-mail is Mary.Eichhorn@otsg.amedd.army.mil. This address is also located on the Army Medicine website, www.armymedicine.army.mil.

Information about *The Provider* is also linked to the Fort Sam Houston site at <http://fsh-intranet.amedd.army.mil/> (under soldier and family support). A popup menu will appear on the right side. Scroll down the menu to the TRICARE link and then click. Or you may go directly to <http://www.cs.amedd.army.mil/tricare/> for "The Provider" information at the lower right side of this screen. — Army MEDCOM Marketing Office